

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Department of Natural Resources

Room 314

August 13, 2002

Minutes

Member Present:

HARTY, Kimm - UGS
SCHLOTTHAUER, Bill - Water Rights
KAPPE, Karl – DFFSL
DANIELS, Ronald – DOGM
MILLS, Erik - DWRe
CARTER, Kevin - SITLA
PARKER, Randy - DAF
PAYNE, Val – DNR
SOWARDS, Glade - DNR
CANNING, Michael - DWR
ADAMS, Carl – DEQ – Water Quality
MONTAGUE, Kent – DEQ - Water Quality
MORTENSEN, Duane – DEQ - DERR
JUSINO, Cesar – NRCS
KEENE, Mike – State Science Advisor
JOHNSON, Wes – DPR

Others Present:

SHAFER, Brad - USFS
BRUECK, Phil - NPS
LOEWEN, Mark – NFS – Dixie NF
KING, Ann – NFS – Manti – La Sal NF
ZIEROTH, Elaine – NFS – Manti - La Sal
ERBA, Tony – NFS – Dixie NF
WRIGHT, Carolyn - GOPB/DNR
LANDURETH, Brenda - DNR/ADMIN

I. Approval of Minutes

Bill Schlotthauer called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

Wes Johnson made a motion to approve the June 11, 2002. Kimm Harty and Karl Kappe made a motion to correct the minutes to read “FOIA” for the acronym on page 3 at the end of the page and “further” will be replaced with “farther” on page 2 in the paragraph discussing drought conditions in various counties. Kimm Harty seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Report from Agencies on Any Anticipated Projects

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service (NFS) presented information on the forest plan revision process for Dixie, Manti-La Sal and Fishlake National Forests (NF). Planning documents were completed in the mid-1980s and currently require revision, especially in regard to public involvement and the social and economic information. There is also a need to integrate the local culture’s concerns in the planning process. The NFS has a contract with the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) through Wes Curtis to gather socio-economic information and trends. NFS will continue to interface with RDCC to better involve

all state agencies in this four-year planning process. A large amount of federal land will be involved in these planning efforts – state involvement is important.

Issues include transportation/access needs (motorized and non-motorized), wild and scenic river eligibility, roadless issues related to roads and trails, coal, oil and gas, recreation and the vegetation section will need to be updated.

Some of the previous meetings have engaged people that actually use national forests and that migrate from Salt Lake City, Richfield, Las Vegas and other areas to recreate at these national forests. Manti-La Sal NF plans to address roadless, ATV/OHV, dispersed camping and other recreation issues. Las Vegas, Nevada and Salt Lake City, Utah residents are interested in recreation issues, soil and water quality protection. Local residents of Richfield and Cedar City are interested in the use of forest resources and other uses that maintain local economics.

Scoping meetings are current in progress and will identify missing and any additional information. This information will help the NFS to better describe desired conditions. Scoping efforts will improve public involvement early in the planning process, help the public develop a better understanding of the issues and to build support in the decision-making process. The NFS will also coordinate closely with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) which is also currently involved in planning efforts for Vernal, Price, Richfield and other areas in Utah. The NFS would like this effort to become a seamless process that builds consensus and that also addresses issues across all boundaries at the appropriate scale. Counties will also participate as cooperating agencies to help interpret data and help encourage public involvement.

Fishlake, Manti-La Sal and Dixie National Forests have been involved in public involvement or scoping meetings which will continue over the next few months. The management direction is moving toward an integrated system type of orientation for planning. The decision space will be based on existing laws and policies. These efforts will help create a better forest plans for the future. Timing of this planning effort and the current condition of the forests (drought conditions and fire hazards/impacts) will influence these planning efforts. Different interests, issues and needs have been identified in regard to recreation and other types of land use.

This effort will produce a more dynamic plan. Water availability and use will be the premiere issue in this planning process. An adaptive management approach will provide a framework for problem solving under various conditions.

Karl Kappe asked about changes in vegetation trends and uses since the old plans, such as dead spruce in the Cedar Mountain area, as it relates to the use of forest products and wildfire hazards in this area. Dixie NF is likely to experience a natural large-scale wildfire event. The public wants to see a green forest. NFS stated that it is the public's responsibility to help treat and manage these lands. The NFS can manage forests responsibly.

Manti-La Sal National Forest has 50 percent roadless areas that limit logging access. Some revisions to the *National Roadless Rule* will be considered. State Institutional Trust Lands (SITLA) owns and manages land adjacent to the Cache National Forest.

The next stage of the planning process (after public involvement/scoping) is to propose alternatives for implementation and to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze alternatives, which should be completed in approximately two years.

The NFS will provide briefings and progress reports as the process proceeds. The state and each county will determine their level of involvement. The state has requested that the counties identify subject experts to assist in the planning process. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides the state as a cooperating agency status for BLM and NFS planning efforts is currently in review and should be finalized soon. There is plenty of time for early participation this calendar year. Ann King will continue to keep Carolyn Wright informed via email updates on NFS planning efforts.

Kimm Harty asked about paleontology and heritage resources and how they would be addressed in these planning efforts. The NFS stated that this issue will be a major concern for the Manti-La Sal NF.

A tentative meeting to discuss Wild and Scenic River eligibility is August 28, 2002, at 10:00 a.m., in the BLM conference room which is located at the Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments building, 375 South Carbon Avenue, Price, Utah. The meeting will cover river segments located in an area covered by the BLM Price Field Office and the Manti Division of the Manti-La Sal National Forest. Kort Utley, GOPB will coordinate with Bill Howell, the Southeastern Association of Governments, Director, Bill Howe will invite county commissioners from Carbon and Emery Counties.

Project Management System #2013, Plan Amendment for Beaver County was discussed. A draft letter will be completed on Monday, August 19, 2002. Kevin Carter, from SITLA made a motion to expedite review of the Plan Amendment (#2013). Karl Kappe seconded the motion. The committee unanimously approved. Please send any comments to Carolyn Wright by August 19, 2002.

Wes Johnson stated that State Parks and Recreation is finalizing the Snow Canyon land exchange it should be completed by next week. Mineral resources will stay with the state. The appraisal should be completed this week. This acquisition will protect the viewshed from development. SITLA will acquire the mineral rights involved in the exchange.

Cesar Jusino, Natural Resource Conservation Service mentioned emergency watershed program is assessing fire impacts. Applications for the 75 percent cost share program are under revision.

Glade Sowards introduced Val Payne as the new Public Lands and Policy Analyst for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Val previously worked as the Public Lands director for Emery County. Val will assume Glade's RDCC responsibilities as a liaison tracking and coordinating comments for DNR. Glade will work for the Utah Energy Office. Please send DNR comments to Val for coordination. Val will serve as a liaison, and will track BLM and NFS planning efforts.

Phil Brueck, deputy superintendent for the Southeast Utah Group of the National Forest Service (NPS) will be serving as the acting state coordinator for the NPS. Vic Knox, NPS has transferred to Alaska.

Ron Daniels announced that the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining is working on two abandoned mine site reclamation efforts. One effort involves plugging oil and gas wells to improve environmental conditions in eastern Utah. The other project involves using new technology acquired using abandoned mine federal funding to help control an underground mine fire in Carbon County, actually two miles west of Helper.

Kevin Carter, SITLA is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Defense Fund and the Cedar City Office of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources on the Parker Mountain Endangered Species Mitigation Project to create a mitigation bank and to improve prairie dog habitat.

Randy Parker, from the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) stated that drought conditions have impacted forage conditions and ranchers have responded to the lack of water availability and poor range condition by selling cattle early this year. Approximately, one crop of hay was produced in most operations in Utah this year. The cost of hay is \$200 per ton. It is difficult to feed and water cattle this year. Ranchers are currently selling four to five times the number of cattle to market, which will result in a loss of genetic characteristics that have been built over several generations. This will have a tremendous long-term impact on rural Utah. Drought conditions are worse than they were (between 1930 to 1950). DAF agency was recently asked to participate on an assessment team that will conduct a BLM statewide review of forage and water conditions and to make recommendations to federal agencies.

Last year the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands presented a Brine Shrimp Harbor Plan to RDCC. Karl Kappe announced that the Record of Decision on brine shrimp harbors will be made next week. Drought impacts on lake level will require dredging at Antelope Island State Park Harbor and at the MagCorp Dike to allow boat access for brine shrimp harvesting operations.

Carl Adams, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) mentioned that EPA changes to the TMDL Program will increase the states oversight role. Kent Montequé, DEQ added that there

has been some difficulty in meeting beneficial use water quality standards for Utah streams due to low water levels at sampling sites.

Karl Kappe made a motion to formally request that Glade Sowards serve as the Utah Energy Office representative on RDCC. Wes Johnson seconded the motion and the committee unanimously approved. Glade will continue to serve as vice-chairman on the committee.

Announcements

As of September 1, 2002, the Division of Water Rights will have a new operating system. Hopefully, there will be no breaks in service on the website.

Lloyd Austin, Division of Water Resources has served on RDCC for many years. Lloyd plans to retire the end of September.

Brad Shafer, formerly with Senator Bennett's Office, is the new statewide coordinator for the NFS. He will be located at DNR.

Bill Schlotthauer has been promoted and his responsibilities may change. He will retain his RDCC assignment until at least the end of this year.

III. Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on September 10, 2002, in room 314.
The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 a.m.